



Arkansas Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems Initiative

Family Support Work Group - July 12, 2005 - 9 - 11 a.m.

Members Present: Jim Abson, Deborah Gangluff, Dana Gonzales, Gwen Paul, Martha Reeder, Kathy Robinson, Kathleen Stafford, and Paula C. Watson.

Regrets: Penny Farrar, Thomas Green, Susan Underwood, Lorie Williams, and Nancy Yarbrough. Jackie Gorton had an emergency related to her daughter and was unable to be present to preside.

In Jackie and Susan's absences, Martha Reeder presided. Self-introductions were made by those present.

Agenda Item #1: Update SFI and AECCS - Martha Reeder

Discussion: The last time this group met, the re-application had already been completed and submitted. There are 17 components that must be addressed in the final plan. The list is included with the handouts. Timeline: The state plan has to be written to show how the five work groups are integrated by March 2006. There is a Grantee meeting in September. We will find out more information at that time. We hope to find out exact deadlines and what is expected.

17 Components. The 17 components are the 17 things that the MCHB demands to be addressed in the Plan. In one way or the other, these 17 components need to be addressed. The bold print indicates how they were addressed in the current application. In the plan there will be things developed that are not complete but still in progress. The challenge is to take time to examine what the MCHB is asking for us to show, then determine how that relates to the task of the Family Support Work Group. We have not yet received notice concerning the award of the grant.

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At the Birth to Three Institute, Sorita Rusher presented information about Project HELP. She is producing a manual that shows how it evolved and how it can be replicated in other areas. The manual should be ready to share in the next month. Martha requested that Dana and Sorita present the project at a future meeting. When Sorita presented in Washington, she had a co-presenter from Guam.

Strengthening Families Initiative (SFI). Applications from the Promising Practice Programs (PPP) came in on the scheduled deadline. There are 16 providers that made application. We are compiling for the reviewers to evaluate and grade.

The readers are composed of some of the original members of the committee who work on the PPP at the retreat. The group will be reading the applications and choosing four for the PPP.

Agenda Item #1, Continued: Update SFI and AECCS – Martha Reeder

Discussion: The applicants come from Arkansas, Franklin, Garland, Greene, Johnson, Logan, Polk, Pope, Pulaski, Sharp, Scott, and Yell counties, with more than one in some of the counties. The geographic distribution is not as comprehensive as the Steering Committee had hoped. All of the 16 applicants and any others who meet some basic requirements will be included in the SFI Network. There is still time to be part of the Network. They must be quality-approved programs. They must have a team composed of the director, staff member, and parent. They must be willing to do the self-assessment and commit to be involved in the program.

The four programs will receive some specific help. The SFI facilitators will work directly with the programs on the specifics. We have Jean McIntosh and Wanda Newell from CSSP working with us.

A conference call will be set up once a month for the self-assessment to be done. It was not part of the application. Facilitators from CSSP will help to guide programs through the self-assessment.

As part of a pre-conference day at the AECA Conference in Hot Springs on October 13, the Network members will be brought together for the first time. Wanda Newell from CSSP will facilitate. She will be bringing with her some representatives from one or more of the exemplary programs. You can refresh your information by going to the web site: www.cssp.org

In the left hand column you can then click on Strengthening Families. The self-assessment is the third chapter in the guidebook.

Early Care and Education Work Group. On July 7 this group met. They are looking at developing a tiered system on quality for child care centers. This group will be working on the specifics related to Family Support. The tool kit is to be plugged into child care centers. (next column)

AR has basic licensing compliance and then quality approval. The tiered quality rating scale (QRS) will offer pathways between the two levels.

A small group was appointed to actually develop this plan to bring back to the larger group by November 1. There are eight people on the small group. They will be asking certain folks to come in and testify as they develop the plan. On August 5, their first meeting, they will be choosing the program areas in which they want to deal. That group is as inclusive as possible. The small group is going to go over the program areas they need help on. The minutes from the small group will be sent out to all consultants. The meetings will be open and the last 15 minutes will be given to the consultants to allow them to speak.

This group will keep an open communication line. In August, when the meeting is held, the group will put in writing the entire process. We will post on the website. We need an agreement to post in a timely manner so everyone will have an opportunity to respond. Some conference calls, some weekly touching base will occur.

The ***Strengthening Families*** pilot sites are potential testing sites for tiered quality. Whatever plan is developed as part of the state plan, will most likely be piloted in selected settings before taking statewide. Because of the blending of AECCS and SFI, it would be a logical “next step” to pilot the tiered quality in the these settings. Another plus is that the pilot sites will represent various types of programs (center- and family- based, Head Start, ABC, small for-profit, etc....) that could demonstrate the potential for all types of programs to benefit from a tiered system of quality.

Agenda Item #2: Parent Survey

Discussion: At the last meeting, Jackie presented the results of the survey from the SFI Kick Off. The survey has been redone to give it more focus and make it easier to compile.

Question: How are we going to distribute the parent specific survey? It will be administered in all SFI Network programs at the parent meeting. When all the information and data will be formatted into a Scantron format so it can be tabulated quickly. It was developed based on responses receive the first time.

The group reviewed the newly revised survey in order to make the necessary changes and alterations. It was suggested on question #1 that we should include foster parents as a category.

Martha also sent the form to Jean McIntosh asking her to help with questions that will elicit the sharing of unique stories.

It was suggested that "e-mail" should be included under #3.

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Process: We could have as many as 25 participating in the SFI Network. We will ask the participants to administer the survey at the first parent meeting in the fall. Centers will have to collect them and return them to us.

Question: When we compile information are we going to return the info to each center? We will be able to pull up that data specifically and then do a composite.

This group's purpose is not just to put a survey together. When we get the results back, we need to do an analysis of what this means (i.e., Study Circles parent responses indicated that the parents did not have enough information about basic child development issues-- it is possible that the survey will reveal similar needs).

Perhaps the questions should be asked, do you find the information useful? Do you read it? How do you like to get the information? Is there another way to reach you? What would be the best way to get your attention? What is the best way to share information with you. What is the last information that you received and how did you receive it?

TASKS: Jackie will take in consideration all the comments and suggestions and continue to fine-tune the survey.

Agenda Item # : Next Steps - Public Relations Plan

Discussion: No new information is available on the Public Relations Plan. The group was reminded to be aware of it and look for opportunities to plug into it. If you want to review it a little closer or have questions, please contact Martha.

Once the PP programs are chosen, the PR Plan calls for a special focus on the four communities where the centers are located. Julie Munsell, from the

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DHS communications office, will help with this phase of the plan. She helped to design the current PR plan.

We are seeking personal stories of persons involved with child care centers to highlight and get the information out.

We are talking about linking the web site with the Center for Effective Parenting. This is still in the discussion stage.

Tasks: Continue discussions with the Center for Effective Parenting.

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Agenda Item # : Next Steps - Meeting with Parent Education Work Group

Discussion: The Parent Education Work Group has more in common with this group than the other groups.

They are going to be meeting on Friday, July 29, from 10 a.m. to 12 Noon, at the Plaza West Office Building. The agenda for that meeting will also be sent to the Family Support members. **(Note: The PE Meeting was cancelled.)**

At some point there needs to be a joint meeting between this group and the Parent Education group. We may soon be at that point where we need to do that. The co-chairs of Parent Education are: Barbara Gilkey and Carolene Thornton.

Sherri Joe McLemore and Nick Long are both in that group. The Family Development Credential is under Parent Education. The parent involvement section of the toolkit is under the Parent Education Work Group.

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As the Parent Education group prepared their snapshot, they realized that there is no statewide activities of Parents' activities. They need to look for funding to make it work more effectively. They are looking at the possibility of combining resources together and making it available state-wide.

Most of the parent involvement literature wants you to look in a different way. Children may limit the ability of parents to be involved in their schools, etc. It is not a very good picture. A better "word" would be looking at parents as "partners" instead of "involved." Every parent is able to partner with programs that children are involved. In every program there needs to be parent and community partners.

Agenda Item #5: Miscellaneous - Next Meeting Date - Adjournment

Discussion: Dana asked Kathleen to notify her when the next airing of "A Walk Upstream" will be on AETN. **(Next airing is August 2 at 9: 0 p.m., and August 1 at : 0 p.m.).** Kathleen will provide Senator Shane Broadway a copy of the video when she meets with him on Thursday.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Next Meeting Date: Tuesday, August 9, 9 - 11 a.m., Memorial Medical Plaza Building, (c o Partners for Inclusive Communities) 2001 Pershing Circle - Suite 00, North Little Rock (c o Deborah Gangluff, 501-9900).

TASKS: Kathleen will provide Paula with a schedule for the AETN airing of A Walk Upstream. Paula will circulate the information to the membership of all work groups.